



Fresh garden fruits and vegetables and colorful swaths of blooms are only part of the impulse for the gardener to dig in the dirt. The temptations and rewards are as individual as the gardener. I've confessed to a collector's impulse (hey! I did NOT say "a hoarder's impulse"), which moves me to acquire many—indeed, sometimes way too many—species and varieties of a plant type in order to experience with my own hands its range of peculiarities, requirements and rewards. It provides an avenue for pursuing new knowledge and experience, and frequently introduces us to new people with similar pursuits and impulses.

Gardeners often describe our joy at watching the many forms of wildlife which visit any given garden. Birds in particular bring color, movement, and pleasure to the gardener's experience. I, too, succumbed to actually *trying* to attract birds and wildlife to my garden, having experienced a constant flow of creatures since creating it.

Since my elderly mother hasn't been able to walk in the garden, I've taken to trying to bring the wildlife and birds to her outside her window. My brother's partner gave Mama a bird feeder several years ago, which I've hung beneath a weeping yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*) at the corner of the big screened porch across the back of her house. I rigged a fountain/bird bath nearby, using an old hose, an old cake pan and an old plant stand. I think the effect is "rustic." It tends to drip a bit, so I put another dish right on the ground to catch the overflow. Nearby we've hung an ancient hummingbird feeder, the red plastic parts having faded to pinkish grey after many years of use.

All three of these seem to do the trick. We can sit at the table on the porch and watch a constant stream of activity. The siting of the feeder beneath the yaupon holly is fortuitous: the weeping branches provide resting spots between feedings for all avian visitors, and cover for smaller birds who need to hide out from the bullying cardinals. The masses of red berries in the fall, winter, and early spring are like caviar to hungry migrating birds. The orioles go crazy as they head south for the winter. This summer, we were entertained with two pairs of painted buntings, a pair of indigo buntings, two pairs of blue grosbeaks, goldfinches, Carolina wrens, towhees, kingbirds, purple finches. The cardinals, of course, rule the roost; they pretty much police the area, with the juvenile males constantly chasing each other away and the adults trying to ignore them.

The rustic bird bath has become the bird spa resort as the weather switches from diluvian monsoon to hot and dry.

We did get a wonderful pair of quail, which I spotted once they emerged from the wide field beyond the pine windbreak. To get to the edge of the yard, they'd crossed some 500 feet of fallow field. They then picked their way across another couple of hundred feet of lawn, heading directly for the bird bath —actually the drip-catcher on the ground below the bath. Clearly, the quail (once common, now rarely seen or heard) knew exactly where they were going. They spent ten minutes at the oasis taking sips, catching insects among the ground covers, and splashing in the dish. Then they made their way back across the lawn, across the field, to the woodland edge where they nest.

The old hummingbird feeder does bring the hummers in. At first, the numbers were fairly small; later the

